DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 334 CS 216 601

AUTHOR	Agee, Jane
TITLE	How Experienced English Teachers Assess the Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction.
INSTITUTION	National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, Albany, NY.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	CELA-R-8.1
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	47p.
CONTRACT	R305A60005
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Decision Making; *English Instruction; *English Teachers; High Schools; *Literature Appreciation; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS	Georgia; New York

ABSTRACT

This study examined some of the factors that shaped how 18 experienced English teachers in New York and Georgia high schools assessed their instructional effectiveness and how they used their assessments to make instructional decisions for the teaching of literature. The research focused on three issues: how these teachers gauged their effectiveness; what factors shaped their beliefs about effective teaching and learning; and how their assessments informed decisions about instruction. To examine the larger system of beliefs that informed these teachers' perspectives on what constituted effective teaching and learning, the researcher collected data on factors that shaped their decisions, the kinds of evidence they sought to gauge their effectiveness, and how their teaching reflected their beliefs. The general feedback these teachers looked or listened for in student talk or writing was linked to four instructional processes: (1) meeting immediate and longer-term goals for teaching literature; (2) making changes in approaches to literature; (3) helping students learn specific skills; and (4) helping students achieve higher levels of intellectual understanding. The specific evidence they sought to decide whether or not their instruction was effective was strongly influenced by their personal histories, their perspectives on students, and their goals for teaching literature. Student factors such as grade level, labeled ability level, race, and home culture emerged across all school sites as important factors in teachers' assessments of instruction. (Contains 32 references, and 5 tables and a figure of data.) (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 427 334

How Experienced English Teachers Assess the Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction

Jane Agee

Center on English Learning & Achievement

The University at Albany ■ The University of Wisconsin-Madison

The University of Oklahoma ■ The University of Washington

CS216601

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

How Experienced English Teachers Assess the Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction

Jane Agee

The National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement
The University at Albany
State University of New York
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
jagee@cnsvax.albany.edu

Report Series 8.1

http://cela.albany.edu/self-assess/index.html

1998

The author wishes to express her thanks to the participants for generously offering their time and effort to this study, as well as to the reviewers, George Newell and Ruth Vinz, for their insightful comments and enthusiasm for this work. Sincere gratitude is extended to Arthur Applebee for filling the role of mentor and guide.

National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement

University at Albany, School of Education, B-9
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
http://cela.albany.edu/
518-442-5026

The Center on English Learning & Achievement (CELA) is a national research and development center located at the University of Albany, State University of New York, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Additional research is conducted at the Universities of Oklahoma and Washington.

The Center, established in 1987, initially focused on the teaching and learning of literature. In March 1996, the Center expanded its focus to include the teaching and learning of English, both as a subject in its own right and as it is learned in other content areas. CELA's work is sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, as part of the National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment.

This report is based on research supported in part under the Research and Development Centers Program (award number R305A60005) as administered by OERI. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education, OERI, or the Institute on Student Achievement.

How Experienced English Teachers Assess the Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction

Jane Agee

Abstract

This study examined some of the factors that shaped how 18 experienced English teachers in New York and Georgia high schools assessed their instructional effectiveness and how they used their assessments to make instructional decisions for the teaching of literature. The research focused on three issues: (a) how these teachers gauged their effectiveness, (b) what factors shaped their beliefs about effective teaching and learning, and (c) how their assessments informed decisions about instruction. To examine the larger system of beliefs that informed these teachers' perspectives on what constituted effective teaching and learning, the researcher collected data on factors that shaped their decisions, the kinds of evidence they sought to gauge their effectiveness, and how their teaching reflected their beliefs.

The general feedback these teachers looked or listened for in student talk or writing was linked to four instructional processes: (1) meeting immediate and longer-term goals for teaching literature, (2) making changes in approaches to literature, (3) helping students learn specific skills, and (4) helping students achieve higher levels of intellectual understanding. The specific evidence they sought to decide whether or not their instruction was effective was strongly influenced by their personal histories, their perspectives on students, and their goals for teaching literature. Student factors such as grade level, labeled ability level, race, and home culture emerged across all school sites as important factors in teachers' assessments of instruction.

This study examined some of the factors that shaped how 18 experienced high school English teachers assessed their instructional effectiveness and how they used their assessments to make instructional decisions for the teaching of literature. I chose to focus on literature instruction because it is frequently the central organizing structure of the high school English curriculum (Applebee, 1993). Narrowing the scope of the study to the teaching of literature also provided a closer look at how teachers' assessments of effectiveness and decisions about instruction were shaped by prior experiences with a content area.

The research focused on three issues: (a) how these teachers gauged their effectiveness, (b) what factors shaped their beliefs about effective teaching and learning, and (c) how their assessments informed decisions about instruction.

Related Research and Theoretical Frame

Early studies of teacher effectiveness (i.e., Flanders, 1970; Flanders & Simon, 1969) assessed large numbers of teachers on specified criteria to determine what kinds of teacher behaviors correlated with student performance or with students' achievement test scores. However, attempts to define or quantify the characteristics of effective teaching were continually conflated with little understood factors that shape instructional decisions.

Researchers investigating teachers' decision-making processes, even with direct observations of teachers and stimulated-recall protocols that involved teachers viewing videotapes of themselves teaching, found that eliciting decisions behind teachers' actions in a classroom could be difficult. For example, in an early study of "inflight decisions" of teachers, McNair (1978-79) used stimulated recall interviews with teachers as they watched videotapes of themselves teaching. Although McNair was able to identify some of the concerns that teachers had over time, she concluded that there were unanswered questions about why they had very different concerns for students of different ability levels and about what factors shaped their instructional decisions: "It appears that these teachers are using some sort of reference model against which they check the ongoing activity" (McNair, 1978-79, p. 40).

Kyriacou and Newson (1982), in a review of research on teacher effectiveness suggested that future research include the perspectives of the teacher and look at how subject matter influenced or constrained effective teaching. We have learned much about teachers and their teaching practices from these earlier studies; however, we still have few studies that solicit individual teachers' perspectives on what they believe to be effective teaching and learning, that investigate how they gauge their own effectiveness, or that examine how cultural factors or personal history affect their instructional decisions. We also have few studies that address these issues with experienced English teachers.

Situation-Specific Praxis

To date, many studies on the effects of teacher behaviors on student achievement (see review by Brophy & Good, 1986) or on teacher efficacy (i.e., Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1993) have consisted of surveys of elementary and middle school teachers or of math and science teachers. The English language arts, especially at the secondary level, has presented particular problems for researchers seeking to quantify the characteristics of effective teaching. Brophy and Good (1986), who reported that the "data for the English classes were more complex" (p. 343), identified the "great range of academic content and activities" as "the root problem" with efficacy research in the English language arts (p. 343).

Exploring the perspectives of teachers in a particular academic content area can tell us much about how academic content shapes their perspectives on their roles and on their instructional effectiveness. Greene (1986) noted, "Many professionals now realize that their practice is almost always situation-specific." (p. 80). Content area, Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) found, strongly influences teachers' goals for learning and how they plan curricula. Science, math, and foreign language teachers tend to use models of instruction that represent the structured and sequential nature of the content. Although English and social studies teachers "may feel a greater sense of curricular autonomy" with their subject matter, curricular freedom brings with it more responsibility for making decisions about what to include in the curriculum, what strategies are most effective, and what content is appropriate (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995, p. 6).

Teaching as Identity and Ideology

Teachers' perspectives on their students may also determine what kinds of teaching and learning they believe are effective or appropriate for them. Factors such as ability, grade level, race, and home cultures of students shape their perspectives in various ways. Brickhouse (1993), in a study of a high school chemistry teacher's strategies for self-assessment and how his assessments informed his teaching, found that the teacher used two broad levels of assessment, "daily" and "long-term." She also found that he was "much clearer about the educational aims . . . for his honors students than for his other classes" (p. 125). However, like McNair (1978-79),

Brickhouse does not explore factors such as different goals for different groups of students or how these differences shaped the teacher's instructional decisions.

Many studies of the processes of teaching and decision making have ignored social and cultural issues. Instead they relied on surveys or observable behaviors of teachers, sometimes in clinical settings (e.g., Claridge & Berliner, 1991; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991; Swanson, O'Connor, & Cooney, 1990). The social, cultural, and personal factors that inform teachers' decision-making have been absent. Documenting how teachers make decisions in the midst of ill-structured events in their daily work can be difficult. Brophy and Good (1986) concluded:

> Even trained and experienced teachers vary widely in how they organize the classroom and present instruction. Specifically, they differ in several respects: the expectations and achievement objectives they hold for themselves, their classes, and individual students; how they select and design academic tasks; and how actively they instruct and communicate with students about academic tasks. Those who do these things successfully produce significantly more achievement than those who do not, but doing them successfully demands a blend of knowledge, energy, motivation, and communication and decision-making skills that few teachers, let alone ordinary adults, possess. (p. 370)

They called for more attention to "teacher's goals and intentions," pointing out that "we need to know what teachers are trying to accomplish in order to interpret their behaviors" (Brophy & Good, 1986, p. 368). Even with this call, a recent review of research on teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998) focuses primarily on survey-based research on teacher efficacy. The researchers explained that their intention is to "make sense of a defined body of work in its own terms," even though they understand that cultural, social, and personal factors "are important" (p.203).

Understanding how teachers make instructional decisions and what goals they have for their students' learning suggests the need to look carefully not only at measurable indicators of their knowledge and ability to instruct but also at how they construct and implement their teaching with particular kinds of content and particular groups of students. The work of Schon (1983) on reflective practice called attention to the decision-making processes used by exceptionally skilled individuals in different professions, including teachers. However, he stopped short of examining the impact that identity, specific contexts, and goals have in shaping an individual's practice. These factors are especially important in understanding how teachers frame situations and what kinds of information they draw upon to inform their actions.

Drawing on the work of Schon (1983), Vinz (1996) showed how both preservice and experienced English teachers' personal lives, their reflective practices, and their pedagogy intersected. Vinz observed that both "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action" revealed a "framework of beliefs through which he [the teacher] simultaneously assesses the viability of alternatives" (p. 109). Both kinds of reflections, Vinz noted, reveal the teachers' philosophies about teaching English.

The attitudes and beliefs teachers bring to a classroom determine how they perceive their students, what their goals are, and how they make decisions about curriculum in their classrooms. For example, Lampert (1985), an elementary mathematics teacher, described her identity and her "personal history" as significant factors in the way she framed and managed her classroom: "The kind of person I am with my students plays an important part in what I am able to accomplish with them. Figuring out who to be in the classroom is part of my job; by holding conflicting parts of myself together, I find a way to manage the conflicts in my work" (p. 183). She concluded, "The person that I wanted to be—this ambiguous self-definition—became a tool to enable me to accomplish my pedagogical goals" (p. 184).

Ideology also determines how teachers define effective teaching and how their perspectives on students shape their ideas about what kind of curriculum and teaching strategies are effective for them. The long-debated practice of ability tracking and labeling students as "honors," "Advanced Placement," "technical preparation," and "remedial" often establish bounded, pre-defined expectations not only for what they can do but also for what they cannot do (e.g., Oakes, 1985). The expectations that follow from these labels shape the daily life of a classroom in ways that may alienate students from content (e.g., Gutierrez, Rhymes, & Larson, 1995).

A number of studies have found that teachers' assumptions about students' abilities, even though well-intended, may actually undermine learning and achievement for students who come to school from home cultures that do not support traditional school literacy practices (Delpit, 1988; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Oakes, 1985; Ogbu, 1978; Paley, 1996). Such assumptions may also determine texts teachers choose for different groups of students. For non-mainstream or non-native students, the literature curriculum may be particularly problematic, offering little that is meaningful to their lives (DeStigter, 1998; Lee, 1993; Sims, 1982).

How teachers assess their effectiveness and make instructional decisions cannot fully be examined without taking into account their histories and beliefs and the range of situations and

individuals they encounter in their classrooms (Goodson, 1992). Thus, this study of experienced English teachers investigates how various social and cultural factors shape their decisions about whether or not their instruction is effective, what kinds of global and specific evidence they seek to make those assessments, and how they use assessments to make instructional decisions with different groups of students.

METHOD

To examine the larger system of beliefs that informed these teachers' perspectives on what constituted effective teaching and learning, I collected data on factors that shaped their decisions, the kinds of evidence they sought to gauge their effectiveness, and how their teaching reflected their beliefs. A useful model for this kind of inquiry is one proposed by Sternberg (1994) for studying the "the interaction between the person and his or her context" (p. 219). He developed this model to provide a tool for understanding why some people achieve more or are more effective than others in a given situation. The model, called PRSVL (Parsifal), includes five variables: Person (who the person is in terms of abilities, knowledge, and ways of thinking), Roles the person is comfortable in assuming, how they handle Situations, Values the person holds, and Luck. All these variables, Sternberg argued, "need to be taken into account in considering what it is that determines a person's ability to interact successfully with his or her context" (p. 231). The study reported on here adapted Sternberg's model to examine the impact of these variables on teachers' conceptions of effective teaching and their interactions (Role, Person, and Values) with different groups of students (Situations). Although the element of Luck may well be an important factor, I did not attempt to include it in this study.

Data Sources

Data sources for this study included: classroom observations, videotapes of classes, reflective statements written by teachers after viewing the videotapes, and audiotaped interviews with teachers. Audiotaped interviews are the primary data source for this report, but I included

evidence from videotapes to show how what they reported in interview data was reflected in their classroom teaching. I videotaped each teacher twice as he or she taught literature in two different classes. The guided interviews were based on a mix of both specific and open-ended questions. Specific questions were used to gather factual information such as the number of years taught, etc. The more open-ended questions were designed to encourage the teachers to talk about their experiences with teaching literature and various factors that have shaped their ideas about what constituted effective literature instruction. The interview questions that addressed assessment of instruction were:

- In terms of the strategies that you use for teaching literature, can you talk about some of things you feel have been especially effective?
- What do you consider or look for when teaching literature to gauge your own effectiveness?
- In terms of teaching literature, what kinds of feedback from students do you most care about?

Data from other questions were used to illustrate how various factors shape teachers' ideas about effective literature instruction and what they use to gauge effectiveness. (See Appendix for a complete list of the interview questions.)

Selection of School Sites

Five schools are represented in this study, two in Georgia, and three in upstate New York. I selected school sites which were accessible and which represented a variety of regional and socioeconomic factors. In Georgia, one school site was an inner-city fine arts magnet school. A second site was a small, rural high school. One of the three sites in upstate New York included a large suburban high school on the edge of a mid-sized city. A second site was a large urban high school in the city, and a third, a medium-sized high school located in a small town about 20 miles from the city. See Table 1 for information on student populations at each school site.

Table 1: Site Data

School	Setting	Population	Race*
Georgia			
Johnson	Urban	500	45% AA 46% EA 9% O
Barton	Rural	800	35% AA 65% EA
New York			
Richardson	Suburban	1800	95% EA 5% O
Watson	Urban	1500	79% EA 21% O
Boyd	Rural	1200	89% EA 11% O

*Key to racial makeup of schools:
AA - African American
EA - Euro-American
O - Other (usually Asian American and Asian Indian American)

Selection of Participants

I asked for volunteers at each school who had taught English five or more years, as I was seeking the perspectives of more experienced teachers who had developed fairly well-elaborated systems of assessment and decision making. Of the twenty teachers who initially volunteered, two withdrew because of demanding extra-curricular duties during the school year. The eighteen teachers who participated—three male and fifteen female—were Euro-American and had taught from five to forty-one years. All names of persons and schools in this report are pseudonyms (see Table 2 for more information on participants).

Table 2: Information on Participants

Teacher	Years Taught	Grades Taught	School
Carolyn	8	9th and 12th	Johnson
Louise	16	11th and 12th	Johnson
Sarah	8	10th	Johnson
Dorothy	25	12th	Boyd
Leslie	22	9th	Boyd
Susan	18	11th	Boyd
Vera	27	9th, 10th, 12th	Boyd
Joy	13	9th, 10th, 11th	Boyd
Gordon	10	9th and 12th	Richardson
Gwen	13	10th and 12th	Richardson
Claire	20	11th and 12th	Richardson
Jenny	20	12th	Barton
Jack	11	9th	Barton
Nancy	16	11th and 12th	Barton
Sherry	11	10th	Barton
Fay	5	10th and 12th	Watson
Rob	41	11th	Watson
Helen	27	10th and 12th	Watson

Data Analysis

I analyzed the transcript data using constant comparison, a method widely used in qualitative research. Constant comparison analysis involves constantly comparing events, behaviors, beliefs, etc., across data. For the analysis, I used Q.S.R. NU-DIST®, a computer database created for qualitative analyses. The method of analysis for the audiotaped interview transcripts involved a process of coming up with statements that describe events, behaviors, beliefs, etc., in the data, a process called open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The next step involved establishing relationships among codes, an inductive process called axial coding that involves organizing open codes into new categories after "making connections between a category and its subcategories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). After developing tentative categories that described the basic phenomena underlying assessment, I assigned numerical designations to the resulting categories to make the data conform to software requirements for coding.

described the basic phenomena underlying assessment, I assigned numerical designations to the resulting categories to make the data conform to software requirements for coding.

To check the validity of the coding system and make further refinements to the tentative categories, I asked two research assistants to code independently each of the interview transcripts. After we coded each interview, we met weekly to review and discuss coding. When differences were noted, we talked about them. Afterwards, I either clarified the wording of the code or made other adjustments, such as merging two codes that were similar. Then we talked about the "fit" of data to the tentative categories derived from the codes.

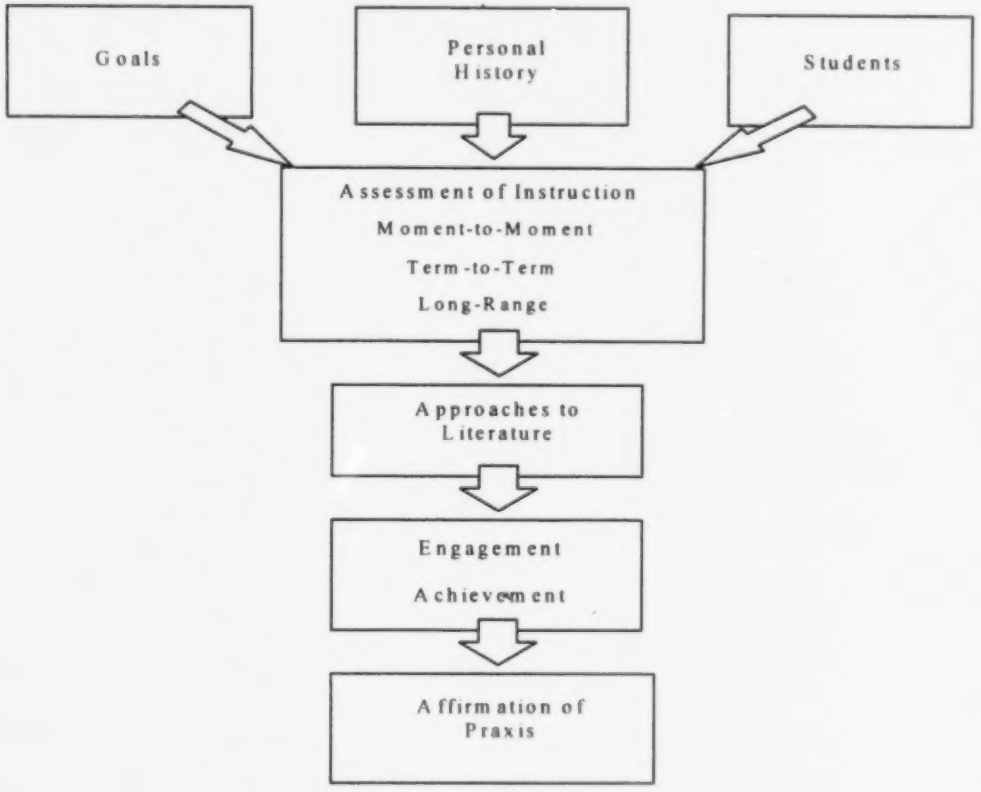
From the analysis of the interview transcripts, I generated theory grounded in the data on participants' descriptions of their assessment practices and the relationships among assessment strategies, personal histories, goals for teaching literature, and instructional decisions with different groups of students. The major categories that emerged in the findings on all eighteen teachers are represented in Figure 1 and in the tables below. To illustrate the qualitative differences between the assessment and decision-making strategies of one teacher and another, I present participants' voices to illustrate findings of a macro-analysis across these data, followed by six profiles that offer micro-analyses of individual teachers.

FINDINGS

Analysis of these data revealed that a number of factors influenced these teachers' ideas about what constituted effective instruction and the strategies that they used to determine their effectiveness at different points in time. A macro-analysis of the interview data on these 18 teachers showed that they used similar global strategies for gauging their success with instruction. The gross cues they reported to assess their effectiveness, such as student talk and written work, were fairly consistent across the data.

However there were distinct differences between one teacher and another in their ideas about what particular factors characterized effective instruction. These qualitative differences were manifested in micro-analyses of what these teachers perceived as effective teaching and learning with different groups of students and how these perceptions shaped their instruction. The

Figure 1: The Process of Assessment of Effective Literature Instruction



findings reported are organized into two sections. The first section shows the kinds of global assessments all 18 teachers relied on to gauge the effectiveness of instruction. The second section focuses on five teachers and the ways in which personal history, different groups of students, and goals shaped their ideas about effective literature instruction.

The global process represented in Figure 1 shows how the assessment of instruction, for all 18 teachers, shaped decisions about instruction and led to a broader affirmation of their larger goals for teaching.

Global Assessments of Instruction

As shown in Figure 1, three general levels of assessment—moment-to moment, term-to-term, and long-range—appeared across the data (see Table 3 below). These findings confirmed some of those described in the studies of Brickhouse (1993) and Vinz (1996), but extend their research to show how assessments were shaped by other factors such as personal history, goals, and students. The global kinds of assessment of instruction reported by the teachers are described below with examples from the interview data on all 18 teachers.

Moment-to-Moment Assessments

Moment-to-moment assessments took place within the flow of interactions during a class. Jack noted that student feedback and performance were significant factors in gauging the effectiveness of his teaching: "If everybody fails, you've messed up. I mean, that's your report card. That's what I was telling my students, 'You get yours [report cards] every nine weeks; I get mine every day.'" Student body language, facial expressions, and talk were the general types of cues that these teachers reported as indicators of effective teaching on a daily basis. These immediate physical cues indicated to teachers how successful they were with maintaining student interest as a lesson unfolded. Five teachers described physical cues as important feedback for making on-the-spot instructional decisions. For example, Louise saw her eleventh- and twelfth-grade students' body language and facial expressions as measures of her ability to get them engaged in literature:

> You can note the enthusiasm. If they come in enthusiastic, they are learning more. If you have to pry them out of their seats, they're probably not learning very much. I need to find what that key is. If they are not enthusiastic, then I've missed, I've mislaid the key to the door somewhere. I need to go back and find a method that will excite them.

Enthusiasm was Louise's "key" to student learning, so she carefully monitored cues indicating engagement. Her attention to student enthusiasm had led her to change her approach to literature over the years. Her students now chose novels they wanted to read rather than those she had selected for the entire class to read. Even though students' choices were from a list she

created, she felt that giving them some choice kept their interest high: "Let's face it, if we have an element of choice in what we are given to read, we can't complain about it the same way." She found that this strategy was good for her as well: "It also keeps it [teaching literature] alive for me, keeps it interesting for me." Thus, her focus on student engagement mediated both the kinds of texts her students read and her approach to literature instruction.

All 18 teachers cited student talk as the most important factor in assessments of their effectiveness as the events of a class activity unfolded. For example, Carolyn looked for a certain level of intensity in her ninth-grade students' comments about the books they had read: "When a student comes in and says, 'I finished it last night. I couldn't put it down. . . . I couldn't sleep last night,' " she felt she had succeeded. For some teachers, particular patterns of student talk could signal effective teaching and learning. Jenny, for example, not only looked for a general level of engagement with her high school seniors but also a pattern of lateral talk between students: "I think if they are engaged, and you're really having a fantastic discussion, all of a sudden, you stop being the center, and they start not only asking but answering the questions." She saw this pattern as important in providing "the best learning environment." When lateral talk occurred, she said, "That is the ultimate sign that things are going well." This pattern of talk provided evidence that she had facilitated successful instruction. Like Jenny and Carolyn, most of the teachers looked for characteristics in student talk that matched their larger goals for literature instruction and to assess their own effectiveness in reaching those goals.

Term-to-Term Assessments

These teachers also assessed their effectiveness with literature instruction over longer periods of time than in a single class session. Term-to-term assessments were based on more formal or more concrete evidence that reflected learning or achievement over time periods that might range from a week to a full term, e.g., a quarter or semester. At the end of these longer chunks of time, teachers reported gauging the success of their instruction based on student performance on essays, teacher-designed tests, and standardized tests. Student talk was important in this category as well, especially one-on-one interactions between a student and the teacher after

reading a text or participating in a project. Students talking to other students about how much they liked or disliked a book or an activity also provided valuable feedback.

Even though some teachers focused on tests or essays for evidence of effective instruction, many also looked at student journal entries, performances, and projects for evidence. For example, when I asked Carolyn to talk about her most effective instructional strategies, she described projects her ninth-grade students did after reading *Night* by Elie Wiesel. The reading was done in conjunction with a social studies unit on the Holocaust, and the students received evaluations on the projects from Carolyn and the social studies teacher. She said, "We were stunned by the engagement of the overwhelming majority of the kids, not only in their responses to the reading and the grades they made on the reading quizzes but also on what they seemed to get out of the project. . . . It worked beautifully." Her assessment of the effectiveness of the project was based on a number of factors included in the unit on the Holocaust and the novel, but the sustained engagement of the students was a critical element.

Term-to-term assessments of instruction were often linked to teachers' major goals or purposes for teaching. For example, Leslie looked at her ninth-grade students' writing to assess "their ability to write about a book" and to gauge her own success in reaching one of her larger goals: to "help them see the power of language in their lives." She used specific activities to help students move toward more articulate written responses, such as asking them to "write down two sentences you love in this book" as a springboard for discussing the language of the author. She also used writing assignments where students "assumed voice and character" or "mimicked [a writer's] style." She gauged the success of her instruction by reflecting on how well she was helping them to move toward her goal: "If I'm doing a good job, they are caring, and they are thinking, and they are writing good things."

Written work was cited by all 18 teachers as an important way of assessing their own effectiveness over longer periods of time. The evidence they sought in student written work, whether formal essays or informal journal entries, reflected what kinds of student learning they believed to be important in the study of literature. For example, Claire felt that the journal writing her students did was important to her gauging her own effectiveness in getting students engaged in reading: "So that's a strategy, you know, the journals." However, she also confessed to some ambivalence about journals: "I go back and forth between the response journals. I

really believe they're the best thing I'm doing, or the kid's doing, but I've always been caught in the trap of wanting to read every word . . . I just get sucked into them."

The onerous task of responding to student journals was mentioned by several teachers, and some had given it up because of the time demands even though they felt it was effective. Jenny said, "I used the journal idea for a while until the volume became too great." Even though her students liked responding to literature in their journals and having Jenny respond, she did not feel the personal sacrifice was one she could make: "Interestingly, the first year I used journals, the students dedicated the annual to me, and I've always thought that part of that was that they were able to get to know me so well through the journals. But I found that the journal . . . was just sort of loading me down."

Those teachers who did use journals with literature sometimes used them for very different purposes depending on what they saw as effective approaches for different groups of students. Leslie, for instance, initially assigned topics for journal responses from her ninth-grade students to see if they had understood reading assignments: "I begin pretty simply just making sure they understand the content." Then she moved to more open-ended responses as the year progressed. Dorothy, on the other hand, used journal writing to help her seniors prepare for college: "I have them do journal responses as they read, and I think it's been much more effective than, for example, years ago I used to have the huge list of questions." The kinds of journal responses she saw as indicative of successful student learning had to show competence in literary analysis:

> Some of them can be personal, but they also have to have responses about theme, predictions. . . . A lot of it is critical thinking, 'What do you see the author doing in terms of character development?' There's usually a list. . . . I usually use the journal as an anticipatory set. Before we read *Death of a Salesman*, I ask them, 'What's your experience with the concept of the American Dream?' to get them thinking about the themes. I use the journal that way.

Teachers also looked to more formal kinds of writing such as the essay or research paper for evidence of both student learning and their own success in teaching literature. The ability to cite textual evidence to support an opinion was an important indicator that they were successful in helping students learn to write in particular ways about literature. Gwen, for example, saw textual evidence in student responses as an indicator of her success in teaching literature: "They know the place to go is back to the text, which is what I think I'm trying to do with literature. Go back, always go back. Don't be afraid to re-read." Joy also felt that students' ability to cite

textual evidence in written work was significant to what she hoped to accomplish: "They can point to textual evidence. You know, they can write a well-organized, definitive kind of essay on a topic. And those kinds of more concrete examples show that they're getting it, and that the teaching has been effective. Or, you know, that they have that kind of response that I would like for them to have." Claire, too, insisted on supporting evidence. She told her students, "Either use your journal or go back and remember what struck you. Try to find that page." She said she explained to them, "Whatever your theory or your interpretation, you need to let us know how you arrived at that." Susan also looked for textual references as evidence that her students knew how to write about literature: "Kids always have to back up what they say with text." However, she acknowledged that assessing and improving her teaching demanded constant reflection and change: "I think it's an ongoing process. I think you forever change your teaching strategies, but when I read an essay, or I look at a kid that's improved dramatically, I can see the difference."

Long-Term Assessments

When I asked these teachers about the kinds of feedback they really cared about from their students, many described feedback from former students who affirmed the selections of literature they read or their approaches to literature. For example, Rob, a veteran of 41 years, recounted an incident with two former students:

> I once had a couple of kids come back and talk to me, and they said, "We think of you as if you were Jonathan Livingston Seagull." [laughs] And I thought, "Well, it could be a lot worse than a seagull." Because it was the first book we tried with that group that year, and they were surprised that such a thin book about birds—"What are you giving us?"—could have such meaning in their lives . . . . That's the kind of feedback that means the most to me. I like students to do well on their final exams, and the things we judge by . . . but that's not what's important. It's the personal reactions.

Rob said he decided, after many years of teaching, that "forced reading is counter-productive in the long-run." He believed that literature, in particular, could have far-reaching effects on his students' lives: "To understand people's motivations, literature will teach you better than life." These former students' testimony about how both a book and their teacher had made an impact on their lives was the ultimate affirmation for Rob of the effectiveness of his teaching. See

Table 3 for a summary the general types of feedback these teachers reported at each level and Table 4 for the cues they reported important in assessing their instructional effectiveness.

Table 3: Types of Cues Used by Teachers to Assess Instruction at Each Level

Type of Cues Indicated at Each Level	Number of Teachers Indicating Use (n=18)
Moment-to-Moment	
Facial expressions or body language of students	5
Verbal responses of students	
Responses to text in class discussions, projects etc.	14
Conversations with teacher about a text before or after a class	11
Responses backed by textual evidence	1
Written responses of students	
Responses backed by textual evidence	4
Term- to-Term	
Verbal responses of students	
Conversations between students about a text	5
Written responses of students	
Informal responses (log, journals, etc.)	8
Essays or essay tests	6
Performance on written tests (pop quizzes, vocabulary quizzes, etc.)	4
Long Term	
Verbal responses of students	
Comments from former students or parents	10
Written responses of students	
Evidence from student evaluations (solicited by teacher)	8

Note. One teacher could be represented in more than one entry in the table above.

Table 4: General Cues Teachers Used to Assess Instruction

Cues Used	Number of Teachers Indicating Use (n=18)
Student Verbal Responses	18
Student Written Responses	18
Student Facial or Body Responses	5

Note. One teacher could be represented in more than one entry in the table above.

Analysis of interview data showed that these teachers sought evidence from students that resonated with their ideas about what constituted effective literature instruction. Qualitative differences in the kinds of evidence they looked for reflected their personal histories, goals for instruction, and perspectives on differing groups of students. Table 5 shows how these factors

were linked to the kinds of evidence the teachers noted as indicators of their instructional effectiveness.

Table 5: Major Factors Mediating Assessment of Instruction and Types of Evidence Sought

Major Factors Influencing Assessment of Effective Instruction	Types of Evidence Sought	Number of Teachers Citing Specific Types of Evidence (n=18)
Student Characteristics		
	Evidence that matched what teacher saw as appropriate for different grades or ability levels	8
Goals		
	Evidence that indicated a certain level of student engagement and that a lesson worked well	14
	Evidence that the student had made larger connections or had "gone a step further" intellectually	10
	Evidence that students had "really read a text"	8
	Evidence that indicated student achievement in relation to larger instructional goals	5
Personal Experience		
	Used own preferences or experiences as a template for evaluating what goals or approaches were effective	10

Note. One teacher could be represented in more than one entry in the table above.

How Five Teachers Gauged The Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction

The brief profiles below illustrate how personal history, students, and goals were important factors in how individual teachers gauged the effectiveness of their instruction and what kinds of evidence were important to them in this process. All 18 teachers I interviewed described the larger goals that informed their teaching and what they regarded as effective literature instruction. Many of them talked in particular about helping students "make connections" as one of their goals. The profiles below show how larger goals shaped the kinds of evidence that teachers saw as important indicators that they were achieving their instructional goals. They

show, too, how strongly perceptions of different groups of students influenced the ways in which they assessed their teaching and made instructional decisions.

Claire

Claire had earned her doctorate in English Education and had taught for 20 years, most of them at Richardson, a suburban high school in upstate New York with a student population that was predominately Euro-American. In addition to her full-time teaching, she also taught English methods courses as an adjunct instructor for a nearby university.

Claire taught four classes at Richardson. One was a senior level class for students in an at-risk program. She also taught an eleventh-grade class and two twelfth-grade classes, one of which she had developed: "This is its third year now, Arts English, for kids who are really interested in the arts, and we see how the arts intersect with literature, films." The other twelfth-grade class was one for which the students received college credit from Syracuse University.

Personal history. Claire had used reading as an escape from an unhappy home life while she was growing up. She recalled spending hours in the library down the street from her home. An avid reader outside school, she found school reading stultifying. Her negative experiences with literature in high school English classes shaped her ideas about what effective teaching literature instruction was and <u>was not</u>:

> I'd be so mad at teachers. . . . We used to have those anthologies with the questions following. And we would have to read stories silently, or turn to the questions in the back and write the answers. I'd be sitting there putting my head down on my desk and saying, "Oh, God, I hate her so much! I hate this so much! No one would ever discuss them. . . . Every day when I'm teaching I remember those kinds of things. Our voices were never heard. . . . I know that really influenced me. I just said, "Damn. I will never do this to my students."

Goals. Claire said she had only one major goal: helping students become life-long readers. Her own experiences with reading for escape and pleasure strongly influenced her long-term goal for her students: "I tell kids that when I see them in ten years, the most important question they will have to answer for me will be, 'What are you reading now?' I mean that's so important. I just want them to love reading."

Assessing teaching and learning. In describing her success with students, Claire focused on how she listened for evidence of intense engagement with books as well as the long-term impact of her approach:

> Kids say, "Can I read that book? Can I read that book that she [another student] told me about?" And the book gets passed all around . . . especially the ones from my own shelves. And I know I have opened up so many kids to reading through those ones off my shelves.

Seeing students passing books around and asking for books provided her with evidence of her success in encouraging her students "to love reading."

Claire's early negative experiences with school literature helped push her toward a pedagogy that was oriented toward engagement with reading and giving students opportunities to have a voice: "I want them to come to literature like adults do, and enjoy it, talk about it, you know? That's probably one of the strategies I like the best." One strategy she developed was letting students occasionally read a book with no assignments attached to the reading. She talked about the kinds of responses she got when she used this approach:

> I always feel like, you know, revolutionary, when they say, "What do we have to do after this, when we're done with this? We loved the book!" And I say, "Nothing. That's it. We're moving on." And they'll just all look dazzled, and, "Oh! Why?" And I said, "We just read a book to read a book. Can we please do that once in a while?" There's always this notion that you have got to attach something to it.

Discussion was a central part of Claire's approach to literature, and she preferred trade books to anthologies. The videotapes of her classroom show shelves of paperback books, many that she described as "books with an edge" like *Billy* by Albert French or *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. She designed instruction to encourage as much student talk as possible, and it was often intense. In a twelfth-grade class, students sat in a half circle engaged in "deep talk" after reading *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. Claire called on individual students at random. They knew the rules: "talk for two minutes about a passage that really bothered or confused you or that you really cared about in the novel." A student called attention to a passage in *Beloved* that she did not understand:

> Student 1: It got me kind of confused because he didn't want Beloved, so why would he choose that time to start feeling emotions again? Because he was so filled

with hate, or so filled with love for Sethe? Is that why he started doing these things?

Claire: How about this! On 117, just read those last couple of sentences and see if you don't notice something there that can confound this whole thing. "Red heart, red heart," over and over again. Now read the next line. Oh my God! I'm not understanding. How many times have I told you I've read this, and this is the first time I'm looking at that sentence and going "Oooh." [Reads sentences.] Oh my God, was he sleeping through this? Was this a dream?

Student 1: That's what I said. First time I read it I said, was this a dream?

Claire: Was this a dream? I don't know [laughs]. This is too much for me now.

Student 2: Well, it can't be a dream because Denver [inaudible].

Claire: I would say it can't, that they've done it a number of times.

Student 3: Do you think it's revenge or whatever, or trying to get Paul D. out of the house, or do you think it's more than that because I think she's kind of confused because she loves Sethe, but she hates her.

Claire: Who's this? Denver?

Student 3: No, Beloved. You know, she loves Sethe, but [inaudible] Sethe killed her. I'm wondering how she feels about Paul D.

Claire: Okay, who wants to talk to that?

As the passage above illustrates, she was willing to puzzle through with her students various possibilities for interpreting the relationships between characters in *Beloved*. She worked to draw students into these conversations by throwing questions, both her own and those of other students, back to the class. Her prior experiences in high school literature classes had shaped her ideas about effective strategies for teaching literature in her own classes.

Her personal history also strongly influenced her larger purpose for teaching literature. The student feedback that Claire valued paralleled her own history and the escape that books had offered her: "I most care about that they enjoy the experience. You know? If this book meant something to them. If it changed or saved their lives in any real way."

Dorothy

Dorothy had taught for 25 years, most of them at Boyd High School, which was located in a small town bordering a rural area in upstate New York. The majority of the student population in the school was Euro-American and came from families who farmed or worked in local industries to earn a living.

Dorothy had earned a doctorate in English Education and was chair of the English Department at Boyd. Although she had begun her teaching career with ninth graders, she much preferred working with college-bound seniors. At the time of our interview, she was teaching three classes of college-bound twelfth graders. Two classes were electives, both senior level creative writing, and one a college preparatory English course.

Personal history. Dorothy, who grew up in a comfortable middle-class family, recalled that books became important for her when her family moved to a new town where there were few children her age: "I would go to the library all the time, and just . . . I mean, loads and loads of books. And my mother saying, 'You just have to get out and have some fresh air. You have to get out, and get some exercise.'" When Dorothy made friends, she found other readers: "We would exchange books, and then we would ask for them for Christmas." She recalled liking school reading and being in the top reading group in her early years in a small Catholic school: "I was a hummingbird, and I never really had any problems reading."

Dorothy had taught high school most of her career. However, after taking a leave of absence to complete her doctorate, she was assigned to teach eighth graders: "It was such a shock to my nervous system to come then to that after, you know, having all that [graduate work]." She described the eighth-grade classes as large and filled with students who had "raging hormones." She found no way to accomplish her goals for teaching literature with younger students: "Here I had come with renewed enthusiasm, and all this theory. I had these plans to do all these wonderful writing workshops, and everything that I was going to do with . . . literature." Although she only stayed in this position for one year, she felt that it was valuable: "In my position now, especially, you know, observing and supervising other teachers, it really adds to your credibility to be able to say, 'I've been there. I can empathize.'"

Goals. Dorothy had some interest in student engagement, but her goals for her honors-level seniors were focused primarily on achievement. Their grade level and the label "honors" strongly shaped her goals and her praxis: "I want them to walk onto that campus with poise and assurance that nothing is going to get me . . . because I've done the kinds of assignments that are going to be, if not literally the same, at least typical."

Assessing teaching and learning. Dorothy looked at the quality of her students' discussions as a first "marker" of her effectiveness, but used their journals to assess whether she had been effective in helping students to achieve goals she believed important for college-bound seniors:

> Half-way through the book, I usually collect journals, and then I can see, intellectually, my next marker is at the level of thought. Are they catching some of the . . . subtleties? Are they getting the theme or some of the symbols, or the meaning of the title? Or even when they're not, you can tell when they're trying.

She looked at the students' writing about literature to determine when "there's an intellectual appreciation, and when there isn't." She saw as "a sign of real maturity" students saying, "'This [book] was difficult . . . but I understand why it's considered a classic,' that's a real indicator to me." She saw these kinds of comments as an indicator of her own success as a teacher.

She found particularly affirming a student coming to her after reading a book to ask, "Do you know any other books by this author?" She noted that such incidents, although rare, had been "a real plus." Such comments indicated to her that she was successful in bringing at least a few students to a level of intellectual understanding consistent with her larger goals for literature instruction.

A videotape of her twelfth-grade college preparatory class showed how Dorothy worked to elicit evidence from her students that they understood how to analyze a poem. She began a lesson on poetry by reading a poem aloud to the students. Afterward they quietly responded in their journals. After reading several other poems aloud, she stressed that she did not want to force poetry on them but wanted them to look at poems more analytically. She asked: "What would you need to do to understand the next step in poetry analysis?" There was no response from the students. Dorothy went to the board and wrote: " Question, Make inferences, Look for figurative language." She asked the students to get into their groups to analyze the poems she had read to them. As they began to work, she called out, "Are we questioning? Are we breaking down each stanza to look at those questions on the board?"

Comments from former students proved especially affirming for Dorothy that her instruction was effective over the long term:

> More recently I've had students come back from school [college], and say, "I felt prepared" or "Now I understand." You know, "You made us do this, and now I know how to do this." They take the time to either come back, or I've gotten nice little notes, and that keeps me . . . you know, that I can still be strong, because that's what I think a lot of it is, that I am setting the standard, and I'm the facilitator.

Dorothy's recounting of testimonials by former students revealed not only her beliefs about her role as a teacher of literature but also the strong effect of her students' grade and ability

levels on what she believed to be effective literature instruction. For example, when she discovered her students were reading John Grisham and Anne Rice novels for their independent reading for her class, she changed her approach and "narrowed the parameters" by providing a book list. She said college-bound seniors "should really expose [themselves] to a little more challenging reading." Even though she valued student engagement, she was looking for a particular type of engagement with particular content to affirm her effectiveness with these students.

Nancy

Nancy had earned her doctorate in English and had taught for six years as a teaching assistant in the freshman English program at a nearby university before coming to teach at Barton High School, located in a rural area of Georgia, where she had taught for 11 years. She continued to teach evening courses in freshman English and commuted from the university community to Barton, about 25 miles away.

At the time of our interview, she was teaching eleventh and twelfth graders. Two twelfth grade classes were designated as "tech prep." The students in her "tech prep" classes were not college bound and were primarily African-American. The two eleventh-grade classes were designated as "honors juniors." These students, most of whom were Euro-American, were college bound, and many would very likely enter the Advanced Placement English course for their senior year. The third class consisted of eleventh-grade "college prep" students, many of whom would probably go to community colleges. These students were a mix of Euro-American and African American.

Personal history. Nancy's father had been a principal in a rural school in Georgia, and her mother, a teacher. They had moved to Illinois for her parents to complete graduate degrees and had then moved to India where Nancy had gone to boarding school in the Himalayan Mountains "with 21 nationalities and teachers from literally all over the world." After her father was killed in a plane crash, her mother moved back to Georgia.

Nancy had no particular interest in English in high school or college. She graduated from college with a B.A. in speech and drama. She credited her husband for inspiring her interest in

literature: "I started reading books he recommended . . . Voltaire's *Candide* and after that *The Sot-weed Factor*, by John Barth. I became so fascinated with reading that I decided to do my graduate work in English."

Goals. When Nancy described her larger goals for her students, it was clear that the contexts of the "honors juniors," "college prep," and "tech prep" classes influenced how she thought about each group of students. The goals that she focused on seemed to be primarily directed toward her honors and college prep students:

> I would love to be able to . . . instill in them my own joy in reading. And certainly, I want to prepare them for college. That's what they are here for . . . the ones that are in the college prep classes. I just want them to enjoy . . . to see in other people's lives . . . reflecting on their own lives and their own problems. And, become acquainted with other cultures, other people, other ideas. When I first came here, and it's certainly not true now, but this seemed to be such . . . an introverted community . . . I mean, everyone . . . looking inward, instead of outward.

Assessing teaching and learning. In our interview, Nancy talked openly about both successes and stumbling blocks with literature instruction. In spite of her efforts to introduce multicultural literature to broaden students' perspectives, she was frustrated by a number of factors, especially the lack of response from her tech prep students. One of the texts that she had used with all of her classes was *Invisible Man*. She talked about what happened when she taught this novel:

> For example, in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, nobody really, really enjoyed reading that book. None of the students . . . which I was very sorry for because there's a lot in there, and it's not that difficult. But when we did short research papers, and they had to do sort of a English 102-type essay about literature . . . many of them chose a chapter from *Invisible Man* or a certain motif. They finally admitted that . . . I mean, in other words, when they studied something in depth, they finally realized that they enjoyed that.
>
> What's very difficult is the tech prep students who cannot read and really comprehend. It's very difficult to get them to understand and appreciate literature. There are a lot of oral interpretations of things. I try to explain things to them. I use, of course, videotapes at times to reinforce the story.

Nancy's perceptions of students in her classes shaped her views about what kinds of literature instruction were effective and what kinds of feedback she valued. In our interview, Nancy talked about how students' behaviors differed in her classes and what kinds of students she looked to for affirmation of her literature instruction:

> I like to hear them say that they've enjoyed the book, of course. . . . I mean, just like you want them to enjoy your class. But, just because they didn't really enjoy a book such as *Invisible Man*, usually they will tell me later that they're glad they read it. . . . It was worthwhile. . . . It was an ordeal, but they. . . . You know, that, of course, is for honor students or college prep. . . . But, you like to hear them say they enjoyed reading it.
>
> Some students, you know, are never going to read anything. . . . That's what's hard. They'll fall asleep in class or, you know, their primary concern is with their children or their after-school job or whatever.

When I asked her about the criteria she used for selecting texts, she described what she considered when she selected books for the honors students:

> For the honor students, I try to select things that I know will be challenging, of course interesting, and of course I always look at the lists of books that are generally included on the AP list because they will be all going on into AP English. And so, I feel that I owe it to them to select some of those books.

Then she described how her selection of texts and approaches varied between the honors and college prep classes:

> I even teach Henry James and *The Turn of the Screw* [in honors classes] but tongue in cheek. We make fun of certain sentences, and we redo them and so on. With the college prep students, the regular students, I teach just usually the conventional things that I, that are available in the library. *The Great Gatsby*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* . . . things that I know from years of experience that they will probably enjoy.

Thus, Nancy's decisions about instruction varied in significant ways for students in these classes. She selected challenging texts like *The Turn of the Screw* or *The Shipping News* by Proulx for her college-bound students and used approaches that were both fun and innovative. In contrast her college prep students read "conventional" texts. She did not at any point during the interview articulate goals, criteria for texts, or approaches for the tech prep students.

The videotape of Nancy's twelfth-grade tech prep class showed her teaching a translation of Mallory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, the text of which was in the anthology. The class included 11 African American and seven Euro-American students. She began by prompting them: "Does anybody remember what we did around a week ago?" A student near the front of the room said they read about King Arthur. "Do you remember what you read or how far you got? We didn't have the whole period to read it, but do you remember somewhat?" The students were unresponsive. Several students had put their heads on their desks shortly after the lesson started.

Nancy pushed on, "We'll start over again because all we did last week was brainstorm some ideas." Nancy, standing at the board, talked about how one defined a hero and then began orally quizzing them on the text:

Nancy:	Who was Mordred's mother and Arthur's half-sister? Do you remember her name? [No one answers.] She goes by several names. In the movie that you're going to see, she is called Morgana. In this account of Arthur, she is called Morgan LeFay. Okay? Now who is Arthur's mentor and magician?
Students:	Merlin.
Nancy:	If you were able to finish this story, you know that at the final battle we have two main knights who face each other. Do you remember who they are?

At this point, Nancy decided to read some passages aloud and wanted them "to look for examples of some of the beautiful figures of speech" that the translator used: "She has outstanding similes, examples of alliteration, and she also has great personification." By this time, more students had put their heads on their desks. At one point, Nancy walked over to one of these students: "I'm just checking. Are you following along?"

Gordon

Gordon had taught for 10 years, most of them at Richardson High School, a suburban school in upstate New York that served primarily middle-class, Euro-American families. He taught a twelfth-grade Advanced Placement class and co-taught with a social studies teacher two ninth-grade interdisciplinary classes that included English and global studies, classes that met every other day for double periods. Both block scheduling and interdisciplinary classes were recent changes, and he was adjusting to new curricular demands.

Personal history. Gordon grew up in an upper-middle-class New Jersey suburb. Three teachers had an impact on his love of reading and writing as well as his decision to teach English. He recalled that it was not until he was in seventh grade that he developed an interest in reading: "I had a teacher in seventh grade who would read aloud to us, and she read several short stories by Shirley Jackson like "After You, My Dear Alphonse." That's the earliest I can

remember being deeply moved by an author's words or story." Gordon also recalled a tenth-grade teacher whose willingness to share and "critique his own writing long before it was fashionable to do" influenced him in positive ways. "He liberated my own writing . . . and gave me license to take chances with writing."

As a college sophomore Gordon had a class with an English professor who "had the ability to talk about literature, to bring alive the earliest beginnings of American literature." At that point, he decided to major in English and minor in education for certification.

Goals. Gordon described his ninth- and twelfth-grade students' talk as a "cue" for judging discussions of literature and what kinds of classroom talk aligned with his goals. He wanted his students to "move from surface readings to insightful readings" and to have a "better understanding of their own aesthetics."

> I take a major cue from the level of interest exhibited by the students, and that level of interest is exhibited through vigorous discussion, or insightful discussion, participation either at a speaking level or a listening level. I think that's my major criteria for judging effectiveness. And it's a dangerous one because students will have other things going on sometimes. . . . And while they may have enjoyed something, many of them have something big coming up, and it's not a real fair way for a teacher to judge himself or herself. But in honesty, that's probably the one major criteria I use for judging my effectiveness in a discussion about literature.

His listening for a "vigorous" and "insightful" discussion was closely tied to his larger instructional goals, even though he realized that kind of feedback might not be entirely reliable.

Gordon explained that he had different, "more humble" goals for his ninth-graders who were in a block class (a combined English and social studies class that he co-taught with a social studies teacher). For these students, he looked for "an appreciation for the world's voices" and "the beginning of a bridge of empathy, understanding and appreciation for the chorus of the world."

Assessing teaching and learning. Gordon listened for qualitatively different responses from his ninth-grade students than from his AP seniors:

> So I'm always very interested in what students feel about a book, and in saying that, I also don't want to give license, particularly to my freshmen, for lots of, "I don't like this." That's why I work so hard with my twelfth graders on that skill. So with my freshmen, I'll phrase it differently, "What's a moment you really liked in this book? And what's a

> moment you didn't like?" I narrow that question so they don't get in the habit of saying, "I don't like this book."

Gordon looked for evidence within each class that he regarded as indicative of an appropriate level of understanding. The student talk he listened for in his ninth-grade class was qualitatively different from the talk he listened for in his senior Advanced Placement course. The ability of students at either grade level to articulate substantive ideas told Gordon that they had achieved an instructional goal he saw as important to the development of critical thinking. He was interested in students' personal enjoyment of literature, but he was far more interested in evidence that students were deeply engaged with ideas.

Gordon said that he was always learning, always grappling with what he observed in his classroom:

> As you well know, a teacher never arrives. You know? Never has all the answers. . . . I've been teaching for nearly ten years, and even though I've been teaching that course for five years, sometimes it still seems like in the reading component, it's survival. 'Will this work?' "

Gordon constantly reflected on his praxis and adjusted his goals when they did not accommodate a given situation. He said he had changed his goals for the ninth-grade class: "My original intention with that course was . . . to have books that represented the voices of the people native to the countries that we were studying." However, he realized that the resources were not there for him: "I continue to realize that was in many ways an unrealistic goal. There just aren't enough works that I have encountered that really work for ninth grade American students." His ability to be reflective about his students' responses to literature helped him to better meet his ninth-grade students' needs. A good example of this process was his decision to choose *Hiroshima* by Hersey as a text for these students:

> I've also brought in . . . moved to the Japan unit, *Hiroshima*, which is, you know, kind of not an imaginative choice but has worked in a deeply affecting way for my students. They're deeply moved, obviously by Hersey's presentation. I think that my choice was that it's going to be a more moving understanding of that terrible event, and for many students, an understanding of the Japanese character, in the way that those people reacted to that event, than trying to put a Japanese novel in their hands. And so, I had to give up the ideal of authentic Japanese voices, or Chinese voices. I had to give leeway, and let the ideal slip away for what truly works, and a better understanding of the needs of my students.

The challenge of teaching literature for Gordon was constructing a pedagogy that deepened students' understandings of the world around them and met their needs in terms of intellectual and social development. He concluded, "It's never an easy process."

The videotape of Gordon teaching his twelfth-grade Advanced Placement class showed students seated in a semi-circle, two rows deep. They had read a Davidson short story titled "Salvage" in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1995). He began class by sharing his own reaction to the story and then guiding the students toward points he wanted them to address:

> This is a story that I liked. . . . You encounter things like duty or loyalty versus moral obligation, and I think the writer really effectively gives examples of these tricky thoughts. . . . For part of our conversation, I would just like those three words to come up. . . . What did people find interesting, or where do you want to begin with this?

Students had begun to explore the story tentatively when Gordon pointed out that Neiman, the main character, undergoes a change and asked how he changed. Students began to offer more elaborated responses as they talked. They ended up discussing eugenics. Gordon used this turn in the topic to extend the discussion as well as to bring them back to the moral issues he wanted them to address in their discussion of the story. He mentioned the recent cloning of a sheep in Scotland: "They cloned a sheep, and a lot of people are now speculating what that means for us. . . . We can now clone humans into this ideal mold . . . which is a kind of scary concept. So what else do people think, in terms of key moments, that showed Neiman's change? What do you think?" He listened carefully to the students' interpretations, but he carefully guided their responses toward a larger view of the ethical issues that surfaced in the story. This approach was consistent with his goals and his listening for "insightful discussion" as evidence of his effectiveness.

Vera

Vera, a veteran teacher with 27 years of experience, taught ninth, tenth, and twelfth graders at Boyd High School in upstate New York. The majority of the student population in the school was Euro-American and came from families who farmed or worked in local industries to earn a living. The ninth and tenth grade classes were general English classes; the twelfth-grade class

focused on film as text. Teaching ninth graders was a new assignment, one that had challenged her usual goals for students.

Personal history. After growing up on a farm in the Midwest with few opportunities for independence, Vera had joined the Peace Corps and spent several years in Borneo. In that remote region of the world, with two boxes of books provided by the Peace Corps, Vera began to understand the power of literature to help an individual make connections between oneself and the larger world. As a teacher, she looked to class discussions as a way of fostering this kind of insight:

> If they can make connections, and if they can say, "That's just like when I did. . . ." or, "It's just like when we read that story last year." If they can start making connections between ideas, I think that makes me feel best, of all kinds of responses that I get.

Goals. One of Vera's major goals was to see students begin to make larger "connections" between one text and another or between a text and their own lives. She also wanted her students to become independent learners and thinkers. These goals grew out of her own history. She had few problems in feeling successful with her instruction in the tenth and twelfth grade classes. However, these goals were not working as well with the ninth graders as they had with older students.

Assessing teaching and learning. When I asked Vera how she decided whether or not her literature instruction was effective, she first noted the impact of body language cues on her decisions: "You can tell by looking at a kid if they're with you or if they're zoned out. . . . Some days they're sitting there quietly and you know you don't have them." She monitored body language to assess their readiness for learning and for participating in discussions about the larger connections she felt were important.

Vera's realization that student attention was crucial to achieving her instructional goals for teaching literature led her to modify her teaching strategies to encourage more student talk and a higher level of engagement. She started using a 3 x 5 card system to call on students at random in whole-class discussions. This system, she reported, allowed her to monitor several things through quick notes on the cards: engagement, preparedness, and how well the students were meeting her instructional goals.

Vera said she also increased her use of small-group discussions of literature after she realized her lectures were not always encouraging the level of engagement she needed to foster good

discussions: "I mean listening to me talk [sighs] . . . they all sit there bright eyed and bushy tailed, but three-quarters of them are zoned out." She monitored their talk in the small groups and had decided that "if they're actually talking about the task fifty percent of the time, I figure that's good." Using small-group discussions, she believed, helped her students become independent thinkers, one of her larger goals for teaching literature.

Vera's goal to encourage her students to become more independent individuals shaped her views on what kinds of instructional approaches to literature were most effective, and she assigned a lot of independent reading and reflective writing about literature. However, the approach had become problematic when she started teaching ninth graders: "It's a hard transition. We always have all this about the transition of the ninth graders. . . . I have not found that the ninth graders have any problems. It's the parents who are not used to their children being responsible." She felt that cultural constraints worked against teachers who encouraged adolescents to be independent learners: "I really want them to feel that confidence, and that they do have control in their life. And we make it hard for them to have that feeling, because we do control them with so many rules, in so many ways in our American system."

Vera expected students to take seriously their independent reading assignments and to be prepared for class discussions. Implementing her goal was not easy, though, with ninth graders: "I have a little conflict with that, about calling parents every time a kid doesn't do a homework assignment. I think the child should feel the brunt of what happens." Conflicts with parents and comments from administrators had forced her to re-evaluate her goals and her approach: "So, I have to work into this ninth grade mentality here a little better."

In a videotape of one of Vera's tenth-grade classes she began class by going over the vocabulary assigned for homework. With 3 x 5 cards in hand, one for each student, she randomly solicited student responses and made notes as the students, long familiar by now with the card system, responded to the questions she posed.

Afterwards Vera changed the focus to setting as a literary device. She asked the students to read a photocopy of the first page of *Kaffir Boy* by Mark Mathabane:

> I don't know if you've ever heard of it [*Kaffir Boy*]. I think it's on our book list that we used last year in the ninth grade because it's very multicultural. I'd like for you to read the first page. Write in the margin there the setting. What do you think is the time and place of this story? And do you think the setting is important? Why? And when I ask you, I want some textual evidence to support that.

After the students read the page, Vera asked them what they had inferred about the rest of the book from the setting. They began with essential details like where the story took place and when, but gradually worked into more complex ideas:

Vera:	Can you tell from reading this the race of the person writing it, if I had not held up the book?
Student 1:	Yeah, you can tell because he talks about how he lived in the black ghettos.
Student 2:	Because of the way he talks about the white man.
Vera:	Okay. He talks about the white man, so you're inferring.
Student 3:	Because the way he says that "South Africa certainly does not know me."
Vera:	Does not know me. So, if he were a white man, you would assume that he might be known by his fellow white men. Okay. Do you get any racial slur? Do you understand that there is a word that's a racial slur?
Student 4:	Kaffir boy?

At this point Vera seemed to realize that she and the students were wandering into uncharted territory and that she had lost track of her original purpose for their reading:

Vera:	Have you ever heard of that before. Kaffir boy? Yeah, that is a racial slur used in South Africa. Do you think that makes a difference? Does the setting of the story make a difference?
Student 5:	In South Africa, the case is different. You know, in South Africa, the small white majority was trying to take over. That's what apartheid was. So that's what this story was written on, because this black person feels that the white man claims to the rest of the world that he knows what is good for black people.
Vera:	Okay. When you get into your groups, I want you to draw some conclusions about when setting makes a difference. It doesn't always, but I want you to talk about that. Am I making it clear? Do you see what I am getting at?
Student 6:	You want to know when setting makes a difference?
Vera:	When setting makes a difference. You guys are really looking into this very, very deeply. Almost more deeply than I . . . than I meant for you to look into it.
Student 6:	You mean we didn't do it right?
Vera:	No, no. I think what you're saying is exactly correct. I guess I was trying to lead you to the idea that, if he's trying to expose to the world the evils of apartheid, setting obviously was important.

In the discussion above, Vera had a specific goal toward which she was working, and she orchestrated the direction of the discussion to meet that goal. Even though she was impressed

with their intense response to the issues of apartheid in the one-page introduction to *Kaffir Boy*, her goal was to have them focus on setting, not ideology. After this discussion, the students broke up into small groups to discuss the role of setting in the novels they were reading independently.

DISCUSSION

Some strategies all 18 teachers used to assess their instruction seem to be fairly routine and confirm some of the earlier research on general strategies for gauging effective instruction (Brickhouse, 1993; Schon, 1983; & Vinz, 1996). Global cues such as student body language, verbal interactions, and written work gave the teachers feedback to determine the general degree of success of an ongoing activity or lesson and to make either short-term or long-term decisions about their approaches and the texts they used. Student engagement, manifested in body language and talk, was an important cue. A high level of engagement represented a measure of students' readiness for learning and achievement.

Of all the global cues, student talk was strongest evidence for these teachers of the effectiveness of their instruction. As Carolyn so aptly phrased it, "What else can you go on if you can't go on what they say verbally?" Student talk gave these teachers immediate, spontaneous feedback in the daily interactions of the classroom. It also provided more thoughtful feedback after a literary text, lesson, or project was completed. Verbal feedback also provided the most important evidence of success in literature instruction over the long term. Former students' verbal testimonials provided the teachers with powerful affirmations of their teaching lives. Rob pointed out that he liked for students to do well on exams, but "that's not what's important. It's the personal reactions." These student affirmations indicated to teachers that their approaches to literature—whether they were using literature to prepare them for college, to help them become "passionate about reading," or to help them deal with problematic home situations—had far-reaching success.

The feedback these teachers looked or listened for in student talk or writing was linked to four instructional processes:

- meeting immediate and longer-term goals for teaching literature
- making changes in approaches to literature
- helping students learn specific skills
- helping students achieve higher levels of intellectual understanding.

The critical differences among these 18 teachers were the particular characteristics that each saw as evidence of effective instruction. For example, some of the teachers were more interested in approaches to literature that promoted engagement rather than achievement or vice versa. Claire was more interested in engagement with literature; Dorothy and Nancy were more interested in achievement and mastery of subject matter for their college-bound students. In the middle were teachers such as Gordon who appeared to be interested in a balance. He wanted students to be engaged with the literature but also to achieve an intellectual "understanding of the world's voices."

All 18 teachers' ideas about what kinds of approaches to literature were most effective were shaped in part by their prior experiences as readers. Their goals, approaches to literature, and assessments grew out of very different personal histories. Claire's experiences in a dysfunctional home and in teacher-centered literature classes influenced her perceptions about effective teaching. She wanted her students to become engaged with books, not just for the present but for the rest of their lives. From former students' feedback, she knew she had "opened up . . . many kids to reading," her ultimate goal as a teacher. She looked for evidence from students that would affirm her goal and her instructional effectiveness in moving students toward this goal.

Students also had a strong influence on what these teachers' saw as appropriate or effective instruction. Grade level was one significant factor. Nearly all of these teachers indicated that they preferred teaching older students because they could more effectively accomplish their goals for teaching literature. When teachers were assigned to teach younger students, they often encountered difficulties. Dorothy recounted her experience with having to teach eighth graders after receiving her doctorate as one that did not match her expectations for teaching literature. She saw the experience as one that gave her credibility as chair of the department, and made it clear that she not only preferred teaching more mature, brighter students but also that her conceptions of herself as an effective teacher did not include other students. Vera found that teaching ninth graders required a change in her larger goals; she was not prepared for the degree of student dependence and parental intrusion that teaching this age group entailed. Gordon

reported that teaching literature to ninth graders in an interdisciplinary class was especially demanding. He had to change his goals for using literary texts that represented "authentic voices" to tell stories of human struggle in other cultures and be to make sure that the texts were developmentally appropriate for ninth graders.

A second factor, the labeled ability level of the students, also influenced these teachers' ideas about what kinds of instruction were most effective. The grade and ability levels of Dorothy's students were important in shaping what she believed to be effective literature instruction for them. She noted "intellectual appreciation" and her students' ability to handle college-level assignments as significant indicators of her success in her role as standard setter. Gordon, with two different age and ability levels, made adjustments for them. He relied on student talk that was "vigorous" and "insightful" as a measure of his success in achieving his instructional goals in his Advanced Placement classes. For his ninth-grade classes, he had similar goals, but he made adjustments for their maturity level. He listened for their early understandings of a text and worked to build on those understandings.

The race and home cultures of students also emerged as important factors in teachers' assessments of instruction at all the school sites. The effects of these student factors on literature instruction were apparent in schools whether they were racially diverse or homogeneous. Nancy, who taught in a racially diverse school in rural Georgia, had very different goals and approaches for teaching literature in her "honors," "tech prep," and "college prep" classes. The tech prep students were predominately African American, and the college prep students were evenly divided by race, half Euro-American and half African American. The honors students were predominately Euro-American. Nancy's background with teaching freshman English at the college level appeared to be one important factor that shaped her goals for teaching literature. Her references to using "102-type" papers, to close readings of traditional texts, and to "wasting good literature" on immature students suggested that she was using goals and strategies with her high school students that were similar to those she used with the college freshmen in the evening courses she taught. Her frustrations with the students in the tech prep and college prep classes appeared to be exacerbated by differences in race and home culture. Nancy ignored the negative feedback from the students in her tech prep classes. She blamed their lack of engagement and success with literature on the deficiencies of their home cultures. She defined her goals and instructional effectiveness solely in terms of her honors students.

More homogeneous Euro-American student populations, such as those in most of the New York school sites, made social and cultural issues less visible from a mainstream perspective. However, the ways in which the teachers in these schools defined effective teaching was closely related to their perspectives on the students they taught. The majority of the students taught by the teachers in the New York school sites were college bound. Although ideological issues in literature were discussed when a contemporary piece of multicultural literature was taught as a way to enlighten students growing up in "white bread suburbia," traditional literature was nearly always exempt from this kind of social critique. Multicultural literature in some cases became either an exemplar for moral development or another vehicle for analysis of literary craft. Vera's focus on setting, for example, moved students away from a discussion of ideology to a general analysis of setting in literary works. Traditional literature was served up as a cultural icon that would help college-bound students appreciate "great literature" and gain entry into college.

Homogeneity, either within schools sites or individual classrooms, also heightened the focus on academic achievement for college-bound students, as was the case with Dorothy. Non-college bound students from working-class homes had very different experiences with literature than their college-bound peers. Data from remedial classes showed literature instruction that focused almost entirely on basic reading skills such as prediction and vocabulary or on recalling basic facts about characters.

When students' home lives, ability or maturity levels created dissonance for teachers in terms of implementing their goals for teaching and learning, some had difficulty interpreting student feedback in productive ways. Nancy, for example, was unable or unwilling to make use of the feedback from her "college-prep" or "tech prep" students. Her larger goals for teaching and the ways in which she measured her success as a teacher were directed toward her honors students.

Feedback from students in some cases precipitated changes in what teachers had previously believed were effective strategies for teaching literature. Gordon's decision to use *Hiroshima*, written by an American, rather than using an authentic Japanese voice reflected his changed perspective on what kinds of literature were appropriate for ninth graders. He said he believed teaching was a learning process for himself as well as for his students; questioning his effectiveness was part of being a good teacher.

The degree to which teachers questioned their approaches to literature and reflected on student feedback was important in the process of gauging effectiveness. Nearly half of them

reported regularly asking students for specific verbal or written feedback if they felt that students were not engaged with a text or were not achieving as they should. They used this solicited feedback to make changes in instruction. However, most of the students from whom they solicited feedback were in advanced, college-bound classes.

Another issue apparent in these data was that teachers sometimes sacrificed what they believed to be effective teaching if it intruded on their personal lives in ways they felt were unacceptable. Journal responses to literature were a case in point. Several teachers were unwilling, even though they had used them and believed them to be effective, to spend the hours outside the classroom needed to write responses.

Also evident were some contradictions between reported goals and actual practice. Vera, for example, wanted her students to be independent thinkers, but her card system and a predetermined, tightly agenda for lessons worked against students experiencing intellectual independence. Nancy wanted her students to enjoy multicultural literature, but her approach—writing critical analyses—squelched their interest.

Across these data, teachers talked little or not at all about their goals for teaching students whose home cultures were significantly different from their own. This finding held regardless of the differences in student populations in the different schools. Teachers consistently gauged their instructional effectiveness by responses from students who were academically talented. In part, this phenomenon appeared to be related to the close match between the students' home cultures and behaviors and those of the teacher. However, the teachers' perspectives also seemed to grow out of unquestioned, institutionalized constructs such as tracking, well documented by Oakes (1985), Ogbu (1978), and others.

Teachers' ideas about effective instruction were in many cases linked to ideologies specific to the study of literature as an academic discipline. Eagleton (1983) argued that "literature, in the meaning of the word we have inherited, is an ideology" and that it has "the most intimate relations to questions of social power" (p. 22). These findings suggest that the teaching of literature in the secondary school is also an ideology. The kinds of approaches and texts teachers believe to be effective with different groups of students are shaped in part by their ideas about what literature is and what counts in the institution of school.

CONCLUSIONS

How these teachers perceived the effectiveness of their literature instruction, what kinds of feedback they sought from students, and how they made instructional decisions grew out of their purposes for teaching English and their perceptions of whose voices should be heard and valued in an academic setting. What their students learned about literature and how they learned it depended upon the perspectives that their teachers brought into their classrooms and how well they listened to their students.

Although conceptualizing assessment in terms of types or levels is useful for highlighting global patterns as well as the qualitative differences in their assessment strategies, it is important to note that any kind of typology is necessarily limited by the school sites and teachers. The types of assessment used by the English teachers in this study are not definitive and cannot be generalized to all secondary school English teachers. However, the qualitative differences apparent across these data suggest productive lines of inquiry for future research. For example, it would be interesting to study a group of teachers, in English or other subject areas, over a longer period of time to see how the evidence they gather to assess the effectiveness of their teaching informs their practice across time. It would also be interesting to compare novice teachers with experienced teachers. How do novice teachers define and assess their effectiveness? What factors shape their assessments of instruction? How are their ideas about effective instruction different from those of experienced teachers?

Finally, as the analyses of these data show, the races, ages, home cultures, and ability levels of students in a given class were important in determining what evidence these teachers sought to assess their instruction or whether they sought evidence at all. These findings lead to a larger question: How do teachers' ideas about what is effective teaching and learning for different groups of students affect student achievement in reading and interpreting literature?

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your early experiences with reading and literature.
2. Tell me about how you decided to become an English teacher.
3. What do you remember about your preservice education courses? Your student teaching?
4. Tell me about your teaching career:

   How long have you taught?

   Where have you taught?

   What grade levels?
5. What are you teaching this coming year?
6. How do you decide what literature, in terms of titles or genres, you will teach? What criteria do you generally use?
7. How do administrators, parents, or the community influence your decisions about the literature that you teach?
8. What kinds of experiences have you had with parents who have questioned or objected to literature you were teaching? How did you handle them? How did these incidents affect your decisions about selecting literature?
9. What do you feel are some of the most effective strategies you've used in teaching literature?
10. How do you decide when a lesson, or a series of lessons, is effective?
11. In what ways do you think your teaching of literature has changed over your career? What prompted these changes?
12. When you're developing a plan for teaching a piece of literature, how do you usually proceed?
13. What kinds of strategies do you use in developing tests on literature?
14. How would you describe your major goals for your students in terms of the literature that you read and study?
15. What kinds of feedback from your students, in terms of reading literature, do you most care about?

SOURCES

Applebee, A. N. (1993). *Literature in the secondary school: Studies of curriculum and instruction in the United States*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Brickhouse, N. W. (1993). What counts as successful instruction? An account of a teacher's self-assessment. *Science Education, 77*, 115-129.

Brophy, J., & Good, T. L. (1986). Teacher behavior and student achievement. In M. Wittrock (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching*. New York: Macmillan.

Claridge, P., & Berliner, D. (1991). Perceptions of student behavior as a function of expertise. *Journal of Classroom Interaction, 26*, 1-8.

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*, 280-298.

DeStigter, T. (1998). The Tesoras Literacy Project: An experiment in democratic communities. *Research in the Teaching of English, 32*, 10-42.

Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Flanders, N. (1970). *Analyzing teacher behavior*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Flanders, N., & Simon, A. (1969). Teacher effectiveness. In R. Ebel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational research* (4th ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Great Britain: Taylor & Francis.

Goodson, I. F. (Ed.). (1992). *Studying teachers' lives*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1986). Reflection and passion in teaching. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 2*, 68-81.

Grossman, P. L., & Stodolsky, S. S. (1995). Content as context: The role of school subjects in secondary school teaching. *Educational Researcher, 24*, 8, 5-11, 23.

Guskey, T. R., & Passaro, P. (1994). Teacher efficacy: A study of construct dimensions. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*, 627-643.

Gutierrez, K., Rhymes, B., & Larson, J. (1995). Script, counterscript, and underlife in the classroom: James Brown versus "Brown v. the board of education." *Harvard Educational Review, 65*, 445-471.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kyriacou, C., & Newson, G. (1982). Teacher effectiveness: A consideration of research problems. *Educational Review, 34*, 3-12.

Lampert, M. (1985). How do teachers manage to teach? Perspectives on problems in practice. *Harvard Educational Review, 55*, 178-194.

Lee, C. D. (1993). *Signifying as a scaffold for literary interpretation: The pedagogical implications of an African American discourse genre.* National Council of Teachers of English Research Report No. 26. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

McNair, K. (1978-79). Capturing inflight decisions: Thoughts while teaching. *Educational Research Quarterly, 3*, 26-42.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste: The American system in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Academic Press.

Paley, V. G. (1996). *White teacher*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sabers, D., Cushing, K., & Berliner, D. (1991). Differences among teachers in a task characterized by simultaneity, multidimensionality, and immediacy. *American Educational Research Journal, 28*, 63-88.

Schon, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Sims, R. (1982). *Shadow and substance: Afro-American experience in contemporary children's fiction*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Sternberg, R. (1994). PRSVL: An integrative framework for understanding the mind in context. In R. Sternberg & R. Wagner (Eds.), *Mind in context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Swanson, L., O'Connor, J., & Cooney, J. (1990). An information processing analysis of expert and novice teachers' problem solving. *American Educational Research Journal, 27*, 533-556.

Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk-Hoy, A., & Hoy, W. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research, 68*, 202-248.

Vinz, R. (1996). *Composing a teaching life*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Woolfolk, A. E., & Hoy, W. K. (1993). Teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational health of schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 93*, 355-372.

Please help us assess the quality of our research report series by completing and returning the questionnaire below:

NAME OF REPORT: **How Experienced English Teachers Assess the Effectiveness of Their Literature Instruction**

1. Your position:

____ elementary school teacher	___ state ed. agency staff	___ policy maker
____ middle school teacher	___ professional developer	___ researcher
____ high school teacher	___ school administrator	___ education writer
____ college teacher/professor	___ district administrator	other_____

2. Clarity

	Very well				Not at all	
a. The concepts in this report were clearly expressed.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. This report was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

3. Utility

a. Reading this report gave me new information or insight into teaching or learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. This report addresses a current and important problem in education,	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
. . . and offers a solution to the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
. . . and/or helps the reader understand the problem from a different perspective.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. I found the ideas and solutions offered in this report to be feasible given current realities of policy and practice.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

4. Scholarship

a. The conclusions drawn in the report are						
. . . adequately supported by the research presented.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
. . . fully grounded in theory.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

5. Any other comments or suggestions regarding this report or additional research needs in the area of English and language arts teaching and learning are greatly appreciated.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return this form to:

Janet Angelis, Associate Director
Center on English Learning & Achievement
University at Albany, State University of New York
1400 Washington Ave., ED, B-9
Albany, NY 12222 (518) 442-5023
jangelis@cnsvax.albany.edu